

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning.*

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THE PORTER'S REST

The degradation of a very sick world can plumb ever new depths. The world just now (as a certain cult keeps telling us) is in a terrible state; but it always has been and always will be. The advent of T.V. has, of course, meant that we get a constant update, on a 24-hour basis, of gloom and doom from all the trouble-spots. Corrupt political systems, despotic dictators, bribery, corruption, catastrophies and disasters (natural and man-made), human greed, violence, rape, torture, cruelty, unprecedented levels of drink and drug addiction, disease and poverty, etc. etc. have caused grief, misery and suffering on an absolutely awesome scale, with the brunt of it falling mainly upon the civilian population and sadly upon innocent little children. In this very advanced and sophisticated civilisation of ours: a computer age which can send men to the moon and back; it is still deplorably true that millions not only are allowed to starve to death, but die in needless wars (of which Bosnia is just one) or die under torture in political prisons, or from disease in refugee camps. The poet Burns so rightly said that man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn, and these words get clear endorsement by the minute. Only God can have any idea of the sheer enormity of the blight and misery brought upon the lives of millions by the evil and callous actions of a few other men. Wretched burdens and loads of sorrow are constantly thrust upon the poor unfortunates of this world, and the rivers of tears are shed on a daily basis.

Think of how wonderful it would be, if all the warring factions in the world could hush their clamour, even for just a moment, and let the call of Jesus be heard, "Come unto Me ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28), for surely these must be the most wonderful, comforting and hopeful words in the English language (or any language for that matter).

BAROS AND PHORTION

We all have burdens to bear, some more than others, and some have burdens imposed upon them at a very early age. Vine, describing the use of the word 'burden' in the N.T., gives the helpful information that, broadly, the word comes from different Greek words; i.e. **Baros** and **Phortion**. In the former case 'burden' would mean an oppressive weight (viz. anything pressing down on one physically) as e.g. Matt. 20:12 "... we have borne the burden and heat of the day," or Gal. 6:2 "bear ye one another's burdens" (see also Acts 15:28 and Rev. 2:24). In the latter case, where 'burden' comes from **Phortion**, the word is used almost always metaphorically, and includes things involved in discipleship: i.e. Christian responsibilities. Examples would be Matt. 11:30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light; or Gal. 6:5 "For every man shall bear

his own burden"; or Luke 11:46 ". . . for ye lade men with burdens grievous".

This significant difference in the two Greek words helps us to comprehend what, to some, is otherwise difficult to understand in Gal. 6:2-5 where Paul exhorts the Galatian Christians to "bear one another's burdens" while at the same time assuring them that each person "shall bear his own burden". The whole passage reads, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then he shall have his glorying to himself alone, and not of his neighbour. For each man shall bear his own burden". What does all this mean, and how can we bear one another's burdens if everyone is to bear their own burdens? J. W. McGarvey's comments on this passage (in the Standard Bible Commentary) are worthy of our notice. After pointing out that the first reference to "burdens" in this passage ("bear ye one other's burdens") comes from the Greek **Baros** and means **distresses**, and that the second reference ("bear his own burden") comes from the Greek **Phortion**, meaning **responsibility**, he says, (Quote) "We should bear one another's burden of trials and sufferings (infirmities of the flesh etc.) and so fulfill the law of Christ, which bids us love one another (John 13:34). For if a man thinketh of himself to be something etc.; i.e. so good that he cannot be tempted, or so strong that he cannot fall, or so perfect that will never need the patience and sympathy of his brethren, when in reality he is nothing; i.e. no better than other men, he deceives himself. But let each man prove (analyse) his own work instead of criticising and judging the work of others, and then he shall have glory in himself alone, and not because he seems superior to his neighbour by comparison of his work with that of his neighbour. And it behoves us to be concerned about our own work, and to thus test it, for each of us must 'bear his own burden': i.e. his own load of duty and accountability, for which alone he shall be called to answer at the Judgement. (Unquote). And so, if we were ever puzzled by this passage, the key lies in the use of the two different Greek words. In short, we must all help others to bear their burdens in life; (ill health, poverty, fear, stress, misery, etc.) for this burden (responsibility) is laid upon us all.

BURDENS OF ALL KINDS: BUT JESUS COPEs

Amongst our own relatives and friends, we can see that people can be so bound up in their own lives and activities, that they fail to notice the difficulties that others have. And on an entirely personal level, we, ourselves, are often quite oblivious to the fact that someone close to us is struggling under a heavy burden. Jesus, however, was well aware of the fact that whereas a few may sail through life with a charmed detachment; for others life is a grinding agony. This burden of misery can, of course, take various forms and may be physical, mental, moral or religious: or indeed a mixture of all. Our Lord had more than ample experience of lifting the burden of physical misery and, although the N.T. records only a tiny percentage of His cures, we can see that thousands came to Him from miles around for His healing touch. He relieved the affliction of the blind; the deaf; the palsied; the physically deformed; the lepers; the insane and every other form of human malady: without a failure. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden: and I will give you rest" was no idle claim as thousands of those who had laboured under the weight of physical incapacity could testify.

Isaiah (61:1) predicted that God would send Christ to "preach good tidings to the meek: to bind up the broken-hearted: and to open the prison to them that are bound". Some have no physical burdens but have mental and emotional ones, and Jesus can deal with those as well. He says, "Come unto Me" to all those who suffer mental stress and anguish brought on by all manner of complex causes. There is the mental hurt

of bereavement, almost everlasting, and the worry over one's health or the health of a family member: the rankling mental resentment over a wrong never righted: jealousy or a desire for vengeance; concern over the behaviour of family members; a strong awareness of past transgressions and the stabbings of a guilty conscience; fear for the future and a fear of death, etc., etc. To all such Jesus could confidently say, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me". And so, as predicted by Isaiah, Jesus is able to bind up the broken-hearted, and release from prison them that are bound.

There was yet another form of burden pressing down upon mankind, when Jesus said, "Come unto Me", and that was the burden of their religion. The religion of the Jews had become an intolerable load to bear, and this was not God's doing, but the work of the Scribes and Rabbis. The Pharisees, whose avowed purpose was to keep meticulously, not so much the Mosaic Law, but the thousands upon thousands of rules and traditions of the Elders, found it a full-time occupation, and had no time for much else. Jesus commented on this quite unnecessary burden (in Matt. 23:4) and advised the people to follow legitimate comment by the Scribes in Moses' law but not to copy their behaviour for "They say but do not do. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders: but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers". The Jewish religion had, over the years amassed these many thousands of rules and rites, which made it a perpetual drudgery. This is the test of any religion. Does it uplift or depress? Is it a pleasure or a pain? Is man helped by it or haunted by it? And so, whether the burden was physical pain; mental anguish or the weight of an oppressive religion: Jesus could lift the load. The Jewish life was hedged about and circumscribed in every facet of life by "Thou shalt not": but under Christ it would be "Go and do good and be happy in your Lord".

THE YOKE AND ITS PURPOSE

It is no accident that "Yoke" and "Burden" have an affinity in the offer of Jesus ("My yoke is easy and My burden is light"). The yoke was designed to cushion the impact of the burden, and depending upon its design could be "easy" (comfortable) or irksome. Most porters find ways of coping with their burdens and one never ceases to be amazed at undernourished Indian dock workers, spindly of limb, carrying massive bales, or slight Eastern women elegantly traversing rough ground with a huge jar filled with water, on their heads. Even worldly men, otherwise quite indifferent to the feelings of their beasts of burden, realise that their animals could live longer and pull heavier loads if provided with a suitable yoke. The best-known form of yoke, in N.T. times is perhaps the one worn by oxen. Sometimes two oxen were yoked together, requiring a double yoke, and presumably this was why Jews were prohibited from yoking together two different types of animal: and presumably why Paul says that believers should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Yokes for oxen were made of wood and were fashioned, by a carpenter, to fit exactly over the neck and shoulders of the beast; something like the padded harness used by large Clydesdale horses. William Barclay, on this subject, says (Quote) "It is Jesus' invitation to take His yoke upon our shoulders. The Jews used the phrase "The yoke" as "entering into submission to". They spoke of the yoke of the Law; the yoke of the kingdom; the yoke of God. But it may well be that Jesus took the words of His invitation from something much nearer home than that. He says, "My yoke is easy" and the word easy in the Greek is *chrestos*, which can mean "well-fitting".

In Palestine ox-yokes were made of wood; the ox was brought and the measurements taken. The yoke was then roughed out by the carpenter and the ox was brought back to have the yoke tried on. The yoke was then carefully adjusted so that it would fit well and would not gall the neck of the patient animal. Thus the yoke was 'tailor-made' to fit the ox. There is a legend that Jesus made the best ox-yokes in all Galilee,

and that farmers flocked from all around to to buy the best yokes that skill could make. In those days, as now, shops had signs above their doors and it has been suggested that the sign over the carpenter's shop in Nazareth may well have been "My Yokes Fit Well". It may well be that Jesus is here using a picture from the carpenter's shop in Nazareth where He had worked throughout the 'silent years' of His youth. So Jesus says 'My yokes fit well'. What He says is this, 'The life I give you to live will not be a burden to gall you: your task: your life will be made to measure to fit you'. (Unquote). Mr. Barclay has always something of interest to say, and quite apart from the "legend" I would be quite prepared to believe that Christ would be the best carpenter in the country.

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE ?

The Lord's offer to exchange burdens with all mankind was not, of course, limited only to those within the sound of His voice, but His invitation had unlimited scope and was intended for all men everywhere, in every century 'till the end of time. But this is not quite true. It was limited. It was limited to **those who would avail themselves** of it. Jesus said, "**Come unto Me**, all ye that labour and are heavy laden". We must come to Him. Why don't people come to Him ? Either they don't trust His words; or they don't feel that they carry a burden. This is perhaps is why the gospel has more impact in the Third World where the sheer burden of life is greater than it is in the west. The struggle to survive, let alone live, in some parts of the world is something of which we, here, know very little. Here, in the west, most of our physical and mental burdens are largely offset by the marvels of medical science, yet man is, in reality, as morally bankrupt as ever he was, and notwithstanding man's apparent indifference and complacency, his heaviest burden is one of SIN. In spiritual terms it is a life-threatening blight upon us all. We must "Come to Him" for its removal. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God". "There is none righteous; no, not one". Medical science, or any other source of great learning, is quite incapable of removing sin. To whom can we go ? no one can forgive sins but Jesus, and He is not only able to save us from our sins, but is ready and **very willing** to do so. "**Come unto Me**" He says. How do we come ? We must hear His gospel (good news): confess our faith in Him, repent of our misdeeds and be cleansed, i.e. immersed (baptised) for the washing away of our sins. Paul himself was instructed to "**Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord**". (Acts 22:16) and every case recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (without exception), of men and women being converted to Christ, involves the hearing of His gospel, faith in Christ, repentance (a resolve to live useful lives in the service of God) and the starting off in that life with "a clean sheet" (born again) with our sins left behind us in the watery grave of baptism (Rom. 6).

It is now some 2,000 years since Christ proclaimed His offer to bear men's burdens, but time in no way diminishes His promise. Indeed our perishing world requires it more than ever. To you, dear reader, and to all men everywhere, Jesus says, "**Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me**". We must LEARN OF HIM. "**For MY yoke is easy and MY burden is light**". This can't be said of every master. And the outcome ? "**Ye shall find rest unto your souls**". Jesus is not promising rest to our bodies, or a bed of roses, but rest unto our souls: and a peace that passeth all understanding.

EDITOR.

WHO shall separate us from the love of Christ ? (Rom. 8:35)

LORD, Thou art life though I be dead,

Love's fire thou art, however, cold I be.

Nor heaven have I nor place to lay my head,

Nor home, but THEE.

GLEANINGS

"Let her glean even among the sheaves." (Ruth 2:15)

TELL IT OUT

"Tell it out among the nations that the Saviour reigns !

Tell it out! Tell it out!

Tell it out among the heathen, bid them burst their chains !

Tell it out! Tell it out!

Tell it out among the weeping ones that Jesus lives;

Tell it out among the weary ones what rest He gives;

Tell it out among the sinners that He came to save;

Tell it out among the dying that He triumphed o'er the grave.

Refrain: Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King!

Tell it out among the nations, bid them shout and sing!

Tell it out! Tell it out!

AN HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isaiah 35:8)

The late Brother John Kendrick, very many years ago, gave four messages at Argyle Street, Hindley, on the Gospel in Promise. The Gospel in Picture, the Gospel in Prophecy, and the Gospel in Person.

I have not John's notes, but I have the word of God, that he loved so dearly, I trust that our loving heavenly Father will abundantly bless the following thoughts on the GOSPEL.

THE GOSPEL IN PROMISE

"NOW the Lord had said unto Abram. Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed". Genesis 12:1-3

THE GOSPEL IN PICTURE

"And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

And the people spake against God, and against Moses. Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness ? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived". Numbers 21:4-9

THE GOSPEL IN PICTURE

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". John 3:14-16

AN HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD

THE GOSPEL IN PROPHECY

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those : the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein". Isaiah 35:8

Transformation

The wilderness	Glad, and waters breakout
The desert	Rejoice and Blossom
Weak hands	Strengthened
Feeble knees	Confirmed
The blind	Eyes opened
The deaf	Ears unstopped
Lame	Leap as an hart
The dumb	Sing
Thirsty land	Springs of water
Habitation of Dragons	Grass with reeds and rushes
No lion or ravenous beast . . .	The redeemed shall walk there
The ransomed of the LORD . . .	Songs and everlasting joy
Joy and Gladness	Sorrow and sighing shall flee away

AN HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD

"Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all the flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it". Isaiah 40:1-5

DESPISED . . . REJECTED . . . SMITTEN . . . AFFLICTED . . . WOUNDED . . . OPPRESSED

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasures of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors". Isaiah 53:9-12

Leonard Morgan

THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF LOVE

One of the greatest needs of this world, in the body of Christ and in the world in general, is more real and abiding love; but especially is this needed among those

who are the children of God. Peter said: **"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"** (1 Peter 1:22,23).

Paul said, **"Let love be without dissimulation"** (without hypocrisy) (Rom. 12:9). Real love, of the quality and quantity set forth in the Bible, is sorely needed among us today.

Most of us have so set our hearts that we can love adorable children, those entirely complimentary to us, and sweet old people. But what about those not altogether lovely, what about those who might disagree with us or those with whom we disagree, or what about those somewhat less than perfect? Are we obligated to love only our friends? There are many who find it absolutely impossible to love any who differ with them in any degree.

People of this nature remind us of Ahab in his relationship with the prophet of God, Micaiah. Micaiah spoke nothing but what the Lord said unto him, yet Ahab said **"I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil"** (1 Kings 22:8). Ahab should have loved this man, because he spoke the truth which others would not, or could not speak, Ahab would have profited by giving heed to this man whom he hated. (You may read all of this interesting story in 1 Kings 22). True love is more than just a sweet feeling extended to those who do good unto us: it is a very deep emotion which has quality and quantity, which enables one to love even those who are less than perfect.

In writing to the saints at Corinth, the apostle Paul gave us a passage which beautifully sets forth the quality of love, Paul said, **"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things"** (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Many have never been able to know a quiet, peaceful, and abiding love because they have never been able to rise above their own person and their own desires. Those who are selfish and self-centred, those who are envious, proud, ego-centred, those who rejoice in iniquity, and are happy to hear and tell of the iniquity of others, will never know the pure joy of loving their neighbour, or their brother in Christ, as themselves; because they do not possess the qualities out of which true love is made. People not developing these qualities may do a lot of hugging, kissing, and professing love, they may even do a fairly good job of counterfeiting love, but they will never possess real love until they fill their hearts with the qualities of love.

THE QUANTITY OF LOVE

One of the poets asked, **"How much do I love thee?"** That is the question we consider as we consider the quantity of love. As the Holy Spirit moved the apostle Paul to write the fourth chapter of Ephesians, he plainly set before us the quantity of the love demanded of all of us. The entire chapter deals with varying aspects of this subject, but, the opening verses and the closing verses pinpoint the quantity which must characterise our personal love. Paul wrote, **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"** (Eph. 4:1-3).

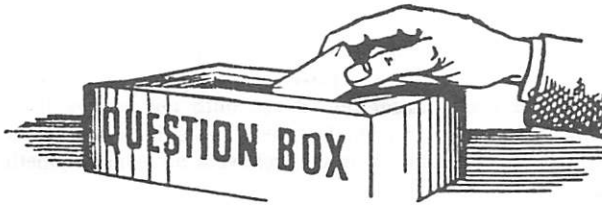
If we have the love that enables us to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, we will be willing to condescend to men of low estate, to look on the things of others, rather than on our own things; we will be meek and lowly. Also, we will be willing to suffer long. Often we use the end of our endurance as an excuse to do a thing which is not motivated by love. If we have the quantity of love demanded,

we will be willing to forbear one another. To forbear means to put up with. If one is less than perfect we can put up with that one if we have enough love. Paul urged the acceptance of the brother weak in the faith (Rom. 14:1).

There is a lot of difference between one weak, not quite perfected, and one incorrigibly rebellious. We are not dealing with a brother in rebellion to the word of God or God's order. Our question is "What should be our attitude to toward those not quite lovely, not quite agreeable, not complimentary to us, those with whom we might become provoked?" Paul answers this question in the ringing words of eternal truth; **"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"** (Eph. 4:31,32). If we could all learn to cultivate the kind of love, in the quantity demanded, as required of God, we would not only greatly benefit the house of God generally, we would be personally blessed here and for all eternity.

Because too many of us fail to develop the quality and quantity of love God requires, we are often found biting and devouring one another and consuming one another (Gal. 5:15). Love does not rejoice in seeing iniquity or in telling of iniquity seen, heard or suspected. **"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue: but in deed and truth"** (1 John 3:18).

A. Robertson.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Does the Bible teach that Christians will receive rewards, and if so, where does judgment fit into the teaching?"

SOME IDEAS EXPLAINED

In our study of the subject of 'rewards', I believe certain ideas must be explained which, in some minds, might seem to have a bearing on the subject.

Right at the outset we need to say that salvation is not a reward for our believing in God and His Christ. Salvation is 'a gift of God', and the Greek word used emphasises its gratuitous character. In Eph. 3:8,9 Paul says, **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast"**. This by the grace already mentioned in v5 of the same chapter. Grace is God's part; faith in Christ is our part. The statement also proves to us that salvation is not a 'work' on our part; grace precludes anything meritorious.

Similarly, we are not to be confused by the phrase **"the measure of the gift of Christ,"** which is found in Eph. 4:7. It was a practice in the East that when a monarch ascended his throne, that out of the munificence of his glory he dispensed gifts to his subjects. When Christ ascended to His Heavenly Throne, He also gave gifts, but these were for a special purpose. (Read Eph. 4:12). These were not 'rewards'.

Blessings are not rewards. The verb 'to bless', EULOGEO, means, 'to speak well of'. The noun EULOGIA means 'good speaking, praise'. It is used of a benefit bestowed, e.g., Gal. 3:14, **"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the 'Gentiles through Jesus Christ'"**. Previously Paul had said, **"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham"**. 3:9. These are benefits bestowed by Christ through the Gospel. Similarly, Paul wanted the 'bounty' of the brethren at Corinth to be 'well

spoken of' See 2 Cor. 9:5,6.

WHAT ARE REWARDS ?

A dictionary definition would be, "Return or recompense for service or merit requital for good or evil". It seems quite obvious that as commitment to Christ differs among Christians, so will the value of the service they render. Some will yield a hundredfold, others only thirtyfold, but they would all be saved because, as we have said, salvation is by grace and cannot be achieved either by service or merit. Therefore, we rightly argue, I believe, when we assert that salvation is **not** a reward, but I contend that for the Christian it can be the **beginning** of rewards. It seems to me that the Scriptures indicate that requital can be for good service, or for wrongdoing. We shall look at the rewards for good service first.

In the first eighteen verses of Matt. 6 we are presented with a stark contrast between what the disciples and the people were being taught by Jesus, and the hypocritical attitude of those who were ostensibly making a great show of praising God. The contrast is presented using the subjects of doing alms, praying, and fasting. The rewards of the hypocrites are plain to see; they would receive the praise of their contemporaries for their outward show of piety, but they would also on the other hand, receive the scathing denunciation of Jesus for their hypocritical attitude. The lesson for us today is, of course, that Christians can have the undoubted reward of basking in the adulation of their fellow-Christians and people of the world, and yet their hearts and minds can be as void of love for Christ as some arid desert is of water. They can enjoy the adulation here and now, but the Lord will surely requite them for their hypocritical attitude and lack of love.

Paul makes the situation a little clearer in Rom. 4:4 when he says "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." In other words the 'workman' gets the 'wages' due to him by virtue of his work, but it is not of grace. He argues in vv1-3 that the Jews might glory in Abraham regarding the flesh, and Luke bears this out in Luke 3:8 when he records John the Baptist as saying to the people, "begin not to say within yourselves. We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham". They were boasting of the achievements of Abraham in the flesh as if this were the sum of what God expected, but Paul says, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God". Rom.4:2. Abraham no doubt earned great respect among his brethren, but this was not the crucial thing so far as God was concerned; the scripture says that "he believed God" and it was that which counted for righteousness. Brethren, we sometimes look for rewards in the wrong places, and of the wrong type. What greater reward can there be here and now in believing what the world considers to be unbelievable; in trusting someone whom the world considers to be a myth; in knowing that the inner peace and contentment does not depend just on a form of words, but in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit with us. These are the real rewards, laid out for us now; further rewards are also laid up for us in Heaven. On top of that, we can also earn the respect of our contemporaries by our diligence to the Lord's work; by our integrity, honesty, reliability, industry, trustworthiness, and all the attributes which spring from a right relationship with God. The Christian life is indeed a rewarding life.

Just one other example from Paul himself. In 1 Cor. 9:16 Paul speaks about having nothing to glory about in preaching the Gospel, indeed, necessity is laid upon him to do just that. In v17 he says, "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me". In v18 he goes on, "What is my reward then ? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel". Apparently, the reward Paul had for his willing service in the gospel was that it should be 'without

expense'. He boasts of this in Acts 20:33-35, **"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive"**. Now here is a grand concept. Willing work in the Gospel, done without incurring expense; providing help to co-workers through manual labour; working with the realisation that it is better to give than to receive. This makes a mockery of the 'what's in it for me' attitude, doesn't it? Have you ever considered these Christian attributes to be 'rewards', or have we gone about Christ's work reluctantly, and considered it to be a chore to be endured?

Rewards? Yes, they're here to be enjoyed in this life, and there will be more to come in the hereafter. It's a matter of knowing where to look, and to appreciate the nature of them, isn't it?

JUDGMENT

Judgment, by definition, is 'the sentence of a court of justice'; the Judge is the one who usually passes the sentence. In the Christian sense, God would seem to be the One to deliver the sentence.

A valid question may be posed at this point, i.e., if the righteous go to Heaven at death, what is the point of a judgment? Now even though this question may seem reasonable and valid, if it came from a Christian it would indicate a degree of scriptural immaturity, because it would mean that God knows nothing about the lives of His children until some final interrogation either at the end of time, or outside time. I personally cannot believe that at some unspecified time God will hold a 'one-off' tribunal of interrogation in order to determine who should or should not be saved. When Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy he said, **"Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his"** 2 Tim. 2:19. The verb 'to know' (Gk. GINOSKO) indicates a relation between the Person knowing and the object known. In 1 Cor. 8:3 we read, **"But if any man loved God, the same is known of him"**. The relationship between 'knower' and 'known' is a 'sealed' relationship, and a continuous and timeless one.

Have you ever wondered how God could bless us, or answer our prayers, if He didn't know all about us? Peter says, **"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"**. 1 Peter 3:12. Brethren, if we believe that the righteous have to wait for a final judgment before it can be decided if they go to Heaven, then we had better revise some of the words used at funeral services of the brethren, especially when we affirm that our departed brother or sister 'is now with his/her Lord', If we believe those words, then I contend we believe that judgment has been passed in respect of what has been done in this life. The Day of Judgment is not to decide if we are guilty, but the day of final sentence. It is not a day of interrogation to find out if we belong to the Lord — the Lord knoweth them that are his — but it is the day of final rewards. I do not believe there is some mindless, senseless 'limbo' somewhere 'midway' between Heaven and earth. Do you?

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,
Winstanley, Wigan. WN3 6ES)

THE DENOMINATIONS

Churches with Peculiar Doctrines

1. — CHARISMATIC CHURCHES

I now turn to review a group of Churches, all of whom claim to have restored the miraculous gifts (*charismata*) associated with primitive Christianity. These comprise

Catholic Apostolic Church, The Apostolic Church (Pentecostals), The Four Square Gospel Churches and the Mormons. The last named differs so significantly from the others that it will require special treatment. The first two also claim to have restored the Apostolate, and have a ministry consisting of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. They are also similar in that the members are committed to tithing. They differ, however, in that, with the Catholic Apostolic Church the number of Apostles was originally twelve, and there is no means provided of continuing the Apostolate as death leaves vacancies; whereas in the Apostolic Church the number is not limited to twelve, and they can be named and appointed by the prophecy at any time.

The Catholic Apostolic Church

The Catholic Apostolic Church (Irvingite) derives its name from the work of Edward Irving, the friend of Carlyle and the famous preacher and Minister of the Scots Church in Regent Square. About that time there were several manifestations, in various parts of Scotland and England, of healing, speaking with tongues, and prophecy; and these finally manifested themselves in Irvings' own Church. As a result of this and his supposed heresy of teaching that our Lord's humanity was sinful, he was finally excommunicated by the Presbytery of Annan in 1833. Those who had previously gone with him from Regent Square met in Newman Street, and so began in 1832 what is now known as the Catholic Apostolic Church. In its creation others were perhaps more formative than Irving, especially Mr. Cardale and Mr. Drummond. Irving was never an Apostle and he died in 1834. The Church differs from others in this group in being soundly Catholic rather than Protestant. In 1842 a liturgical form of service was adopted and later vestments, oil, incense, etc., were introduced. The fourfold Ministry is maintained of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Pastors, but the Church is now without Apostles, the last one having died in 1901. Ministry is not necessarily professional and in one Church a large proportion of the male members will be in the Ministry, which has its three grades of Angel (Bishop), Presbyter and Deacon. Ordination is by the Apostles, so that the Church is bound to die out as the Ministry disappears. Infant Baptism is practised, but not indiscriminate Baptism, 'Sealing', corresponding to Confirmation, was by the hands of the Apostles in the late 'teens'. The Lord's Supper is celebrated each Sunday forenoon as the chief act of worship, preceded by Morning Prayer, and there are also services at the first and last hour of the Jewish day. There is also Communion of the pre-sanctified in the afternoon for those not able to be present in the morning, and for this service the elements are reserved in a Tabernacle on the altar, as also for the Communion of the sick. There is a constant looking forward to the immediate coming of our Lord. The Church has appealed in the main to the upper-middle class and to the aristocracy, the beauty of its worship appealing to many of refined tastes. Its Liturgy, based on Eastern models, is one of the richest in Christendom. Its central Church is that in Gordon Square, London, an edifice of Cathedral-like proportions. The expression of fellowship is strong in the community, which numbers perhaps about 10,000.

The Apostolic Church

Contrasted to Irvingism, the doctrinal position of the Apostolic Church is that of conservative Evangelicalism with the emphasis on the second coming and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Believers' Baptism by immersion is practised and the Lord's Supper is celebrated each Sunday morning. Baptism of the Holy Ghost is received by the laying on of hands. The Church began as a result of the Welsh Revival in 1904-5. Ordination to every grade of Ministry is by the laying on of hands by the Apostles. Several grades are non-professional. The Church is governed by Apostles and Prophets in Council. The headquarters are in Penygroes, near Llanelly, Wales.

The Four Square Gospel Church

The Elim Four Square Gospel Alliance, with headquarters at 20 Clarence Avenue, Clapham Park, London, represents a movement which began at Monaghan, Ireland, in 1915, as a result of the work of Principal George Jeffreys, a Welsh Evangelist. Doctrinally it represents evangelical conservatism which preaches Christ under four aspects, as the Saviour of the Soul, the Healer of the Body, the Baptiser with the Holy Ghost, and the Reigning King. The Advent is thought of as premillennial. Believers' Baptism only is practised, but not as a saving ordinance, and the Lord's Supper is celebrated each Sunday, open communion being practised. Overseers are appointed in Districts and under them are the Pastors and Deacons in the local congregations. The government is central and not congregational. In more recent times there has been division on the question as to what 'gifts' are permanent in the Church, the separating body rejecting the 'gift of tongues' and allowing only healing and prophecy. Healing is by the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. The movement is vigorously evangelistic and has a most rapid growth. A training College is established in London for training of Pastors.

W. Robinson.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

June 6 1 Kings 17:8-24 Matt. 15:21-39
 June 13 Deut. 18:9-22 Matt. 16: 1-20
 June 20 Malachi 3:16 4:6 Matt. 16:21-17:13
 June 27 Exodus 30:1-16 Matt. 17:14-27

MIRACLES

The only explanation for the wonderful works that Jesus performed was that He was God incarnate. Let every sceptic ask himself: "If a man claimed he was God in the flesh what would I expect him to be able to do? Heal the sick? Give sight to the blind? Make the deaf hear? Help the lame to walk? Feed the hungry? raise the dead? Raise himself from the dead?" The answer surely is clear.

What amazes me above all is that, despite the fact Jesus did all these great things, so many still rejected Him. I can hardly take it in. However, on reflection, I guess I should never underestimate the ability of Satan to blind people to realities. He is a master at it. Physical blindness is a terrible affliction, but spiritual blindness is worse and can lead to eternal disaster. The apostle Paul refers to this latter condition a number of times in his

epistles (2 Corinthians 3:14; 4:4; Ephesians 4:18).

John wrote: "**And many other signs (miracles) truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name**" (John 20:30,31). Personally, I believe in Jesus and in all the miracles He performed. I have no problems with any of them I do not go out of my way to explain them, but simply account them as they are revealed in the Scriptures.

In this portion of Scripture, we read of a number of Jesus' miracles. I like what Matthew wrote in verses 30 & 31 of chapter 15: "**And great multitudes came unto Him, having with them those who were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and He healed them; insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they heard the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel**".

PETER'S CONFESSION

In was in the district of Caesarea Philippi that Jesus asked His disciples:

“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (16:13). As one commentator has pointed out: “The great question of Jesus was not asked in Jerusalem, the religious centre of Judaism in the world. It was not asked along the shores of Galilee, the teeming commercial centre of Palestine. Instead, He waited until He stood near the foot of Isbel Shrik, the Prince’s Mount, a lofty branch of the Lebanon range which formed the boundary between Palestine and Syria”. To me, as one having personally visited the area, Jesus could not have asked it in a better place.

Caesarea Philippi was only four miles from the site of Dan, the northern most city of the ancient tribal inheritance. Here were sites of ancient altars and ruined temples devoted to the baalim of Syria and Phoenicia. The district was also considered the birthplace of Pan — the god of flocks and fields and forests. So it was as highly regarded by the Greeks as by the pagans. But this is not all. The Jews looked to this area as the source of the Jordan River, which they hallowed because of its historical influence on their national life; and the Romans venerated the temple to Caesar, whom they worshipped as a god. W. Carl Ketcherside wrote: “Here at the one spot in Palestine where all cultures of the world met, on the very threshold of ‘the nations’ and at the back door of ‘the land of the people’. He asked His disciples about His identity”.

Peter made the great confession : **“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”** (16:16). But what precisely is meant by these titles? Christ or Messiah has to do with Jesus being the anointed of God. So to believe that **“Jesus is the Christ”** is to receive Him as the only prophet, the only priest, and the only king, qualified and empowered by our heavenly Father to instruct us, to atone and intercede for us, to reign over our conscience, to guide, defend and lead

us to victory. **“Son of the living God”** means that Jesus is God in the flesh. Lancelot Oliver has written: “If John 5:17-18;8:53-59; and Matthew 26:63 be consulted, the conclusion that Jesus regarded His Sonship as including His divine Nature is unavoidable, except by giving up our confidence in His sincere and good character as a man. In these passages we find that the Jews regard Jesus as claiming, through calling God His own father, to be equal with God . . . Peter’s confession stands fixed to mean, in addition to His having generally fulfilled all the predictions of the Christ, that in particular He fulfilled the requirement that the Christ should be divine. Thus no human made creed includes Deity more clearly than the inspired creed of the Apostolic Church”.

CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus said: **“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”** (16:24-26). From these words, the message comes over loud and clear that believing and serving Jesus is a matter of life and death. Too, there has to be the denial of self. In other words, there has to be the enthronement of God and the dethronement of self. As one writer has put it: “To deny oneself means to obliterate self as the dominant principle of life and to make God the ruling principle, more, the ruling passion of life. The life of constant self-denial is the life of constant assent to God” A children’s chorus also puts it well: “Jesus first, yourself last and others in-between”.

A life lived for Jesus is a life of sacrifice. Paul wrote to the Romans: **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your**

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (12:1). What Jesus was willing to do for us, we must be willing to do for Him. It is only logical or reasonable! As the hymn writer put it:

Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God,
In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Every time I read the account of the transfiguration, I am reminded of the words of Walter Scott, the great preacher and relative of Sir Walter Scott: "The transfiguration should be the theme of our most devout meditation. It should be studied by every disciple who desires to possess a bright and animated hope of the glory to be revealed. When we meditate upon **hades**, the receptacle of the souls of the dead, 'clouds of darkness rest upon it'. But when our meditations overleap the negative, and by the Transfiguration ascend into the positive of eternal life, all is sunshine, unclouded glory and eternal day. The problem of humanity is solved. Man is immortal and the principal end of his existence is 'to glorify God and enjoy him for ever'. (Catechism).

Moses and Elijah appeared at this time — Moses the great lawgiver and Elijah the great reforming prophet. But God said of Jesus: "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear you Him**" (17:5). Here was the approval of God. In other words, "Go no more to the law, nor to the prophets, to seek for a coming Messiah: for behold he is come! Hear and obey Him, and Him only". (Adam Clarke).

Ian S. Davidson.
Motherwell.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Zimbabwe: The Church in Gweru sends greetings to the churches in your area. The Lord looks after us well and the Church in Gweru continues steadfastly. We were very heartened at the end of 1992 when we had 6 baptisms of young teenagers whom we had been teaching for 9 years. We pray the Lord will help them in their faithfulness during their adult life.

I received this news in a letter from brother George Edy, Church Gweru, Zimbabwe.

John Keller.

OBITUARY

Longshoot, Wigan: We are sad to report the passing of Brother Michael Merrion at the age of 69 years. For many years Michael had been a devoted worker in the Church, formerly at Albert Street and latterly at Longshoot.

He had served the Church in many capacities and his teaching from God's word benefitted not only the local congregation, but also others throughout the country which he visited. He was well versed in the Scriptures, and used his knowledge to good effect in offering helpful advice when necessary.

He loved to be in the company of his brethren, and although a heart condition prevented him from participating as fully in the Church's work as he used to, he was ever-present at all the Meetings. Indeed it was at a Meeting that he was taken ill with another heart attack and died in hospital a few days later.

Mr. Nehru, Indian Prime Minister, told students in Bombay that 'my real learning began after I left Cambridge,' and that nothing would be lost if the degrees Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts were abolished. 'Degrees', he said, 'do not show the knowledge of a person. Often a man without one has more sense than a man with one'.

Michael will be greatly missed in the Church, such brothers are not easily replaced. We commend his wife Lily and son David to the love and comfort to be found in the Lord, and mourn his passing not as those without hope but in the knowledge of the resurrection of the saints made possible through Jesus our Lord.

D. Melling.

CHANGE MEETING TIMES

The church here at Easthouses have decided to hold our Gospel Meetings in the Summer months at 6.00 p.m., starting first Sunday in May to the last Sunday in October, and our Winter Gospel Meetings from the first Sunday in November to the last Sunday in April at 5.00 p.m.

M. Finlay, Secretary.

GHANA APPEAL

The work continues to progress in Ghana. Further funds have been distributed for building of a meeting place and for Gospel Work. The brethren continue to reach out to preach the Word and we have received a photograph of the most recent congregation to be added by the Lord to His Kingdom, in the Volta Region. The Church at Angu have almost completed their meeting place. We continue to have requests for new buildings but we have decided to complete the existing buildings in progress before tackling any further projects. Buildings in Accra, Koforidua, Nbowam, Huhunya, Peki No. 2, Odumasi and Patriensa are requiring aid in purchasing building materials. There is less than £100 in the Ghana Appeal Bank account as I write. Further donations would be very much appreciated. Cheques should be made out to:- Graeme Pearson, (Ghana Appeal), and sent to 13 Fairways, Dunfermline. Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel. (0383) 728624.

P.S. Thank you. "Yours in Him" for £5 note received in March.

GHANA APPEAL FUND: THANKS WE ARE GRATEFUL

Over the past years we brethren in Ghana have been receiving donations made in various forms from you British brethren who were moved by a genuine concern, love and desire to see the growth of the Lord's Church in our part of the world.

We acknowledge receipt of that great show of Christian love through those donations. It must be emphasised that your donations have in no small way contributed to the infrastructural development of many congregations. Plots of land were purchased, buildings for Church worship were being built.

Similarly, the physical and spiritual needs of many brethren received the attention of the Fund. The sick have financial access to medical care, tracts, Bibles and other Christian Literatures have come to satisfy the spiritual hunger of many.

As we enter the New Year, it is our prayer that the Lord keeps and preserves your lives and blesses the labour of your hands. May this bond of brotherliness between Churches in Britain and Ghana grow from strength in the years ahead.

May you cheer up with the words in (1st Corinthians 15:58).

God bless you all.

Bro. Wisdom Kpehor, (Sec).
Church of Christ,
Winneba Road, ACCRA.

A ship in the harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are made for.

Character is not made in a crisis — it is only exhibited.

Jumping to conclusions is not half as good exercise as digging for facts.

It is better to take things as they come than to try to catch them as they go.

When a task is once begun,
Never quit until it's done.

If your task be great or small,
Do it well or not at all.

WELL SAID

How easily one may justify self, when he stands with the majority.

How easily one may feel he could not prevent what happened, when he was too cowardly to try.

How easily the spiritually weak and spineless could stand hidden in the masses and cry with a loud voice. "Crucify him, crucify him!"

A doctrine is not false just because you have never heard it before, or because it is contrary to what you have always understood, or because you are not willing to accept it.

Neither is it right because you can't disprove it, nor because a big-name preacher advocates it, nor because it is what the majority believe.

Some people who boast about being broadminded are really just too indifferent and ignorant to know just which side they should be on . . . that's nothing to boast about!

WHY ?

When people go to a football game, they want a seat on the fifty yard line.

When they go to a basketball game, they want a seat at mid-court.

When they attend a play they want a seat about midway in the auditorium.

When they go to a boxing or wrestling match, they want a ring-side seat.

When they go to a circus parade, they want to stand in the front line.

BUT — when they go to Church, everone wants a back seat.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

When a boy gets up at four o'clock in the morning to deliver his papers, people say he is a go-getter.

If the Church were to ask this same boy to get up at four o'clock to do some work for the Lord, they would say, "That's asking too much from the boy".

If a woman spends eight hours away from home working in the factory or raising a garden, she is called an energetic wife.

If, however, she is willing to do the same for the Church they say, "Religion has gone to her head".

If one ties himself down to make payments of thirty dollars each week on a car for pleasure or some other item for personal enjoyments he pays willingly.

But if that same person placed that much in the collection plate each week, many people would say he was crazy.

This is a crazy world indeed, where first things come last and last things come first. — *Canadian Christian*.

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JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY
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EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian,
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